

The three times Eleven faced jealousy by lovelysarcastic

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Summary:

Jealousy was a bitch, especially if you had Eleven's powers.

The three times Eleven faced jealousy

Author's Note:

This is just a random one-shot that came to my mind. I'm still working on my story, 11:11, and I'll be updating soon.

The first time Eleven felt jealous she did not quite understand the feeling. It had happened one afternoon, during a birthday party to which she had been invited alongside the boys and Max. Of course, the only reason she had gone was because the boys had asked the birthday girl – a petit, blonde girl called Jennifer – if their friend, who was home-schooled at that time, could come too. Jennifer, who back then had had her eyes on Will Byers, said sure, their friend could come along. The more, the merrier.

Eleven had been fourteen then and, even though she had been back for a year now and had been learning with no trouble most things she had had been deprived of during her years imprisoned in the lab, a huge group of eager fourteen-year-old teenagers was something she had not been quite ready to face.

She stared at the birthday party's environment with her mouth opened and her eyes filled with shock, and a bit of fear. By her side, Mike Wheeler was smiling gently, wondering what was going through her mind. The other boys had gone ahead to give Jennifer her gift. Together, they had all got her a set of comic books about a super heroine.

"Are you okay?" Max asked, having stayed behind as well.

Eleven gulped and looked at her friend. She nodded lightly.

"Yes." She turned to Mike. "Snacks?"

Mike nodded seriously. He had told her that if she ever felt a bit too suffocated during the party, she could just ask for snacks and he would get the message to take her somewhere quieter. He had not expected it to happen as soon as they stepped in the party, but either

way he grabbed her hand and took her to the other edge of the Hayes' backyard where the number of excited teenagers was less. They sat down on the swings (Who had a set of swings in their backyard? Jennifer Hayes, of course.), and Mike looked at her, worried. Eleven forced a tiny smile.

"I'm okay," she said.

"You asked for snacks," he replied.

"I... I just need time. To... adjust," she tried to explain. Sometimes expressing herself was complicated.

Mike nodded, understanding. He always did.

"I'll stay with you."

Of course, his promise was not broken. He indeed stayed with her for as long as Eleven needed. Mike was always good like that. However, it didn't stop a girl from approaching them. Completely ignoring Eleven, she batted her eyes at Mike and made small chat.

"I'm surprised to see you here, Mike," the tall, brunette girl said.

Mike's cheeks turned a bit red (but not as red as they usually turned whenever Eleven kissed his cheek or held his hand) and muttered, "How come, Patricia?"

The girl, Patricia, shrugged and threw her curly, brown hair behind her shoulders. She leaned against the swing's pole, next to Mike.

"You guys never accept coming to birthday parties, that's all."

Eleven kept staring at the girl with a curious look. She had a pretty dress on: it was green, with small blue flowers drawn on it. Eleven would probably compliment her, since Joyce had taught her to be nice to other people and not be afraid of saying what was on her mind, but, for some reason, she kind of didn't like the girl.

"Lucas was the one that convince us, really," Mike confessed with an awkward smile on his lips.

"Of course he was," the girl replied with a giggle and leaned forward to touch Mike's shoulder.

Eleven frowned.

What did she touch Mike's shoulder for?

And why did Mike blush at her gesture?

Eleven suddenly looked down at her feet, feeling a sort of anger bubbling inside her. What was happening?

The girl kept making small chat with Mike and Mike kept talking back. He not once tried to make Eleven part of the talk, which made her even more upset. And sad. The anger she felt inside was starting to mix up with a feeling of sadness, of... being an outsider. Mike had never once made her feel like she didn't belong, but right now... It was like she wasn't even there.

"Either way, you should really come to more of these, Mike."

Eleven looked up that moment to realize the girl had crouched by Mike's swing and was almost face to face with him now. She had a smile on her face. Mike seemed as awkward as ever.

"I mean, it would be nice... to see you more often."

Mike couldn't help the tiny smile spreading on his lips and the blush on his face. It was almost like an automatic response to the girl's words. Usually, girls didn't pay much attention to him; he was always hanging out with Will, Dustin or Lucas. Girls liked Lucas because he was very out-going. They liked Will because, according to what they heard, he was the cutest. And they liked Dustin because he was funny. But Mike... skinny, old Mike? He was just that, just Mike.

Finally, the girl stood up and walked away after being called by one of her friends. Mike's blush started to dissipate from his cheeks as he turned to look at Eleven. The smile on his lips disappeared upon meeting her apathetic facial expression.

"El, what's wrong?" He asked worried.

Eleven didn't bother to reply. She stood up from the swing and walked up to where Dustin and Lucas were hanging out with Max. She left Mike behind, that feeling of anger and hurt making its way from her stomach to her chest as well.

"Oh, El, what's wrong?" Dustin asked after seeing her facial expression.

"What did Mike do now? Didn't hold your hand?" Lucas joked. Eleven and Mike were friends, just like everyone in the group was, but it was quite clear that the two of them lingered around unresolved feelings for one another; Eleven too shy to say something and Mike too idiot to do something.

Eleven didn't answer them. She felt a lump in her throat and instantly knew that if she talked, she would cry. And she did not want to show that kind of weakness in the middle of a birthday party. So, she leaned over the snacks table and grabbed a bowl of gummy bears.

As soon as Mike made his way to them, she walked away and went to explore the backyard. Mike stared at her wide-eyed and hurt.

"What did you do now, Michael?" Max asked, concerned.

"N-nothing."

"I think you did something," Lucas replied, his eyes wandering through the snack table for something to eat.

"I... But I didn't," Mike insisted.

Suddenly, Will showed up. He looked at Mike with confusion in his eyes.

"So, I was talking to Jennifer -" Lucas snickered - "No need for that!" Will seemed embarrassed for a moment, before turning to Mike again. "Anyways, Patricia came over. She said you were flirting with her."

"Dude," Dustin let out, shaking his head.

Lucas rolled his eyes and Max threw her hands in the air before

walking away, following Eleven's steps.

"I-I wasn't!" Mike exclaimed. "She was making chit chat and I replied, that's all. I mean-"

"She said you were like completely ignoring the girl that was with you and just talking to her," Will interrupted him.

"But-" Mike didn't know what to say. He had just been polite to Patricia. She usually didn't talk to him, so he thought he should give a good impression of himself. His father always told him that to leave a good impression was the first step to get a nice acquaintance. Eleven had wanted a few minutes to herself, to adjust to the party, like she had said, and he had given her that time. Talking to Patricia had just been a way of passing the time.

"Dude, you have to talk to her," Dustin.

"But not now," Lucas added.

Mike frowned.

"Why not?"

"Man, you don't know anything about girls." Lucas shook his head. He raised his right hand and pointed his finger at Mike. "Listen, Eleven's probably pissed at you right now. I mean, you never ignore her and suddenly a girl shows up and-

"But I didn't do it on purpose!"

"It doesn't matter!" Lucas replied. "The point is, she's upset and now she needs time to cool it off. Max went after her. Let her deal with this. Then, you can talk to Eleven."

Mike sighed.

"This is why I didn't want to come to this stupid party," he muttered upset.

"What? Have you seen this table of snacks?" Dusting asked, motioning with his hand to the gigantic squarish table next to them.

“It is amazing, okay?”

Mike rolled his eyes and muttered something under his breath.

On the other side of the backyard, Eleven was sadly eating gummy bear after gummy bear when Max showed up and sat down next to her on the weird looking green bench that the Hayes family had in the backyard.

“So, I’ve heard Mike screwed up.”

Eleven shrugged.

Max rolled her eyes and leaned back on the bench. She looked around for a while, seeing that the boys were still all by the snack table. Mike seemed troubled.

“You know, he doesn’t get it,” Max said.

Eleven glanced at her, frowning.

“That you practically treat him like your boyfriend,” Max explained. Eleven blushed. “It’s okay for you to do it since, come on, he wants to be your boyfriend, he’s just an idiot, but-“

“He wants to?” Eleven interrupted, surprised.

Max rolled her eyes again.

“Jeez, you two. You know what? I’m not even going to say anything else.”

They remained in silence for a while, Max looking at the people in the party and judging their behaviour and Eleven staring at her half-eaten bowl of gummy bears. Neither girl had something to say for now. Max couldn’t quite get the relationship between Mike and Eleven. She did understand Mike was holding himself back on many things when it came to the girl sitting next her since he thought she wasn’t quite ready for whatever he wanted. He thought that her feelings for him were of gratitude and friendship. Mike was blind.

“I don’t understand what I felt,” Eleven suddenly said.

Max looked at her.

“What do you mean?”

“When Mike and the girl were talking, I felt something... I don’t get what it was.”

Max turned her body to Eleven, resting an arm on the bench’s back.

“Describe it.”

Whenever Eleven couldn’t quite understand something, she would try and describe it so that the other kids could help her out.

“It was...anger... but sadness... And... I felt, like, really bad?” Eleven looked at Max, scared. “Because I wanted the girl to disappear, and I wanted Mike to talk to me and-“ She shook her head slightly. “I don’t get it.”

Max smiled softly.

“It’s called jealousy, El.”

The girl frowned.

“Jealously,” she repeated the word.

“Yeah. You were jealous because Mike was giving another girl’s attention. Attention that you wanted, right?” After Eleven nodded, Max continued, “It’s okay to be jealous. You’ll probably feel jealous about a lot of things, not only about Mike. But... the important thing to remember is that: it’s just a feeling. And, if you talk to people about it, it will help to make it go away. In this case, you have to talk to Mike about it.”

Eleven shook her head frenetically. Max frowned.

“He’ll... I don’t... I-“ The girl sighed and put down the bowl of gummy bears. She played with her fingers, anxious. “He’ll not understand...”

“Mike always understands you,” Max replied. Because it was true.

Eleven sighed sadly.

“But... you say, you say that I act like... like he’s my boyfriend,” Eleven said with a light blush on her cheeks, “but Mike... doesn’t get it... I don’t get it sometimes. It’s confusing, you know?”

“It’s only confusing because you two are idiots who don’t do anything about it.” Max suddenly shook her head. “No, scratch that. It’s only confusing because Mike is an idiot.”

Eleven looked at Max with a wrinkle between her eyes and an offended facial expression. Max wanted to roll her eyes again.

“Mike isn’t an idiot,” Eleven reacted.

“Oh, now you’re defending him?”

Eleven blushed and picked up the bowl of gummy bears again. She began to eat the rest of them. Max gave up on the conversation since she knew she had done her job and nothing else could be said at this point. Eleven now understood what she had felt when the other girl talked to Mike and it was on her to decide what to do.

The rest of the party felt lame for Mike. He sat down on the swings again and stayed there for most of the time, watching as Eleven moved around and mingled with other people. Of course, the girl didn’t want to do it, but their friends pulled her with them so that she didn’t seem like a loner (or a loser like Mike) at her first party.

Around five pm, Mike went to say goodbye since he knew his mother was coming to pick him up. His eyes lingered for a second on Eleven’s face before he walked away from them.

He was about to reach the front yard of the house when he heard steps following him and then felt a hand on his back. He turned around.

“El.”

Eleven took a deep breath.

“I’m sorry.”

Mike blinked.

“You’re sorry?”

Eleven seemed confused with Mike’s confusion.

“Yes... For the way I acted.”

Mike shook his head.

“No, I’m sorry... I... I was trying to give you some time to adjust to the party, and you thought that I was... ignoring you. Right?” Eleven nodded shyly. Mike stepped closer and grabbed her hand. “I’m sorry, okay? I was just being polite to Patricia.”

At the mention of the girl’s name, Eleven wrinkled her nose in repulse.

“I didn’t like her,” she confessed.

Mike sighed.

“I know... I... She said some things to her friends... Will told us. I was just being polite to her, really, El.”

“But she wasn’t,” Eleven replied. “She was... She wanted something from you.”

That girl had wanted from Mike the same thing Eleven wanted every day from him.

Mike snorted.

“Yeah, right. Patricia is, like, one of the most popular girls in class, so... she wouldn’t look at me like that.”

Eleven frowned.

“Why not?”

Mike sighed. It was awkward and embarrassing to have to explain these things to Eleven. The girl had met Mike under different circumstances. If she had known him as the loser Wheeler, the frog

face, that people knew from school, she wouldn't want to be his friend.

"She just wouldn't, okay?"

The honk of a car interrupted their conversation. Mike looked over his shoulder and saw his mother waiting for him. He turned to Eleven again and squeezed her hand.

"I have to go. But we'll talk later, okay?"

Eleven nodded, agreeing.

"Okay."

Mike was about to pull his hand away from hers and leave when she pulled him back. He frowned, confused for a second, before his face turned into a deep red as Eleven leaned in and kissed his cheek.

"Bye, Mike."

"Bye, E-el."

That was the day Eleven felt jealousy for the first time. From then on, whenever she felt that mix of anger and hurt suffocating her chest, she understood right away what it was. There weren't many times she got to feel it. She never found a good enough reason to be jealous of anything or anyone, and, since the incident with Patricia, no girl who talked or hung out with Mike made her feel that way again.

Until their junior year in high school.

At that point, Eleven and Mike had been dating for six months. He had asked her out on the same date that they had first met in 1983: November 7th. Eleven couldn't have been happier watching the scrawny boy who was about to become her boyfriend blushing and stuttering out the question that would change their relationship status. He had been so nervous, so naively scared that she would say no. But Eleven gave him no space to doubt or worry. As soon as the question left his mouth, she wrapped her arms around him and kissed him. *Yes, Mike, of course.*

If they had thought that their friends' teasing was bad when they were just friends, then they weren't quite ready for what came after they announced that they were boyfriend and girlfriend. Almost every day, Dustin and Lucas made sure to point out whenever Mike and Eleven were being too affectionate with each other, usually making the boy blush and the girl smile adorably at her boyfriend. There were other times in which they liked to tease Eleven more than Mike, especially when girls showed up. After Jennifer Hayes' birthday party, when they were fourteen, Eleven earned a bit of a title in the group as "a possessive girlfriend" even though she and Mike hadn't been dating back then. Of course, this was all a joke; everyone understood very well that Eleven and Mike were special to each other, and the fact that both could be a little possessive when it came to one another was super normal. But they liked to tease nonetheless.

They were usually wrong when it came to finding preys for Eleven's jealousy. Most girls that, for instance, had to do group works with Mike, or hang out with him, Eleven was okay with them. One look at them and she instantly knew they were fine. There was no need to be jealous.

Until Mike was paired up with a girl called Annabelle in his Biology class during their junior year.

Oh, that girl... The moment Eleven watched her approach Mike during their lunch time in the cafeteria she had known the other girl was trouble. Mike had stood up and walked away with her as the girl had asked to speak in private with him.

"Oooh, the Jealousy has arrived," Lucas joked.

The rest of them laughed, used to that kind of joke. But, oh boy, how Lucas had been right.

Eleven stared at her boyfriend who was nodding at something his new Biology partner said. The girl then giggled and put a hand on his arm. Mike seemed surprised with the touch and, as politely as possible, managed to step away from it. But the girl closed the distance he had put between them and kept on talking to him.

Eleven bit her tongue and controlled the terrible feeling that suffocated her chest, that made her angry and hurt at the same time. No one understood her, but Eleven just knew when someone wanted something from Mike. One look at them, at their mind, and she knew. It wasn't like she could read the girl's mind or anything, but she could sense it on her, how happy she was to be talking to Mike, how there was something inside her mind cooking, preparing...

"Oh shit, you're actually jealous," Dustin remarked.

Eleven blinked and turned her body to the table, to her friends. They were all staring at her open-mouthed. Lucas had an amused, yet shocked sparkle in his eyes, like he wanted to laugh but didn't know if he could.

Mike came back after a while. He sat down on his seat next to Eleven and dug into his meal again. Suddenly, he realized the table was awfully quiet. He first looked at his girlfriend, who had her eyes fixed on her plate, and then to his friends, who were giving him signs through their eyes to look back at Eleven again.

"What's wrong?" He asked his girlfriend.

"Nothing," Eleven muttered before putting a French fry in her mouth.

Eleven might have been a one-word-answer girl when they first met, but not anymore. Especially not to Mike.

The frown on his forehead deepened.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

Something was wrong. But he wouldn't try and find out what it was now, not with their friends sitting in front of them, not when they were in the middle of the school's cafeteria.

Mike waited until their classes ended. As usual, he waited for El by his car (a car he had inherited from Nancy who, in her turn, had got it when their father bought a new car and had no use for their old one). He knew she was upset about something, but she wouldn't

refuse a ride home since Hopper was stuck at work until five pm, at least. Mike always drove her home. Sometimes they used their free time after school to drive around and go somewhere to be alone. He had feeling that today El wouldn't feel like going somewhere with him.

Fifteen minutes after the usual time that it took Eleven to get to his car, his girlfriend showed up, walking slow and not facing him. Mike sighed.

"What did I do?" He asked straightaway.

Eleven went around the car and to the passenger's seat. She tried to open the door, but Mike had yet unlocked the car.

Mike turned around and laid his arms over the car's hood.

"El," he called. The girl looked at him, a bit upset. "Friends don't lie, remember?"

Eleven tried to keep up the straight face, but hearing those words always softened her. She nodded.

"Well, girlfriends and boyfriends neither," he reminded her.

Eleven blinked.

Truth was, she never got around to understand how to deal with jealousy. She never got to realize that, even though she had been jealous of Mike's Biology partner, he had not seen it the same way she did. He couldn't read her mind; all he knew is that she was upset, that something had made her upset.

"Can you unlock the car, please?" She asked nicely.

Mike nodded and took his car keys out of his jeans' front pocket. He opened the car and they both got in, throwing their schoolbags on the backseats. Then, Mike turned to his girlfriend and waited for an explanation.

He didn't like it when he did something to hurt Eleven. He wished he could be perfect for her, but there had never been a *How to Be a*

Boyfriend 101 book to read.

"I don't like her."

Mike blinked.

"Her?"

"Your Biology partner."

"Annabelle?"

Eleven made a face upon hearing the name.

"She's just my Biology partner."

"She wants something," Eleven replied.

Mike laughed.

Eleven turned to him with her eyes wide-opened in shock and offense, making his laugh die halfway through.

"I'm serious, Mike."

"But El... I've- I've literally talked with Annabelle two times: one when we got paired up and she sat next to me – Hey, don't give me that look, come on. You know how these things work." Eleven tried to stop glaring at him. Mike sighed and leaned over to grab her hand. "Annabelle does not want anything to do with me, okay?"

Eleven glanced at him and then at the hand he was stroking gently to try and soothe her.

"Mike," she started, pulling her hand away from his, "I've flipped a van over our heads once, remember?"

"Y-yeah?"

"I've communicated with people on a parallel world, remember?"

"Yes, I do," Mike said, trying to understand where she was getting at.

“And I... I can make things move with my mind, can't I?”

“Yes.”

“So, don't come and tell me that I'm wrong when I say that that Biology partner of yours wants something from you, okay?”

Mike blinked, his mouth half-opened and his eyes filled with admiration and confusion.

“El...”

“Let's go home, yes?”

Mike muttered an agreement and turned to the wheel. He turned on the engine and looked behind his shoulder, making sure he wouldn't hit any car passing by as he exited his parking spot.

The ride to El's house was a quiet one.

The next time Eleven got to see Mike's Biology partner the girl was giggling at something her boyfriend was saying. Mike flustered, surprised with the girl's giggle, and a weird-looking smile appeared on his lips.

“You're not going to make anything explode, are you?” Will asked quietly since they were in the library. Why did he think it was a good idea to bring Eleven to the library when he knew Mike would be working on his project with Annabelle there? Lucas had warned him. Dustin had said it was a terrible idea. Will was too pure for this world.

“Please, make something explode,” Max begged, sitting on the other side of Eleven.

Will sent her a glare.

“What? It would be fun,” Max replied and moved her History book closer. Of course, she had not paid any attention to it.

“Ugh, you're trying to get us expelled from here or something?” Will asked.

The only answer he got from the redhead girl was a snort.

Their eyes turned to the pair once again. Mike had already seen his friends and girlfriend sitting four tables away from them, but Annabelle hadn't. She kept on getting closer and closer to Mike, and Mike kept on trying to move away, but at this point he was stuck between the table's leg and Annabelle's chair.

"I'm going to set her on fire," Eleven said.

"Don't do that!" Will exclaimed in a murmur.

"Oh, that would be amazing!"

"Maax!"

The girl snickered.

Eleven tried to focus on her English essay. She had to write something about the character Lady Macbeth from Shakespeare's play Macbeth, but Annabelle's hands on Mike's arm, Annabelle's annoying giggles and Annabelle's second intentions that she could sense clearly even four tables away from them were bothering her a lot.

"I never thought you'd be this possessive," Will said, breaking Eleven's stream of thoughts.

She looked at him with a frown. From her left side, Max laughed.

"Are you kidding me? Even when I only heard stories from Eleven, I knew she was going to be like this with Mike. Lucas made it very clear that Mike was, like, her precious person on this planet."

Eleven blushed, momentarily shy.

Her feelings for Mike ran deeper than anything she could feel for anybody, and, believe me, she felt a lot of gratitude, love and friendship for many people in her life, but Mike... Mike, like Max quoted Lucas, was her precious person. He was her favourite, the one that made her feel safe and home. When she first came back, she remembered how the boy had reacted: He hadn't believed in what he was seeing and ran away. He had run away and hurt Eleven deeply

until Hopper explained to her that Mike, well, Mike had believed she was truly gone, and seeing her was too much of a shock. But the boy would come around. And he did, a few hours later. He had approached her, touched her hand and then, after Eleven had whispered his name, Mike had hugged her tightly, filling her ears with promises to never let her go again.

“Oh boy,” Will muttered.

Eleven’s eyes flickered to where Mike and his partner were sitting. The girl, Annabelle (ugh, Eleven would forever hate that name now), had dropped an arm on Mike’s shoulders and was almost sitting on his lap, trying to read something from his book. Mike stared at her with his eyes wide-opened, his cheeks red from awkwardness.

Eleven gulped and gripped her pencil so hard she almost broke it.

Four tables away from them, Annabelle’s chair suddenly fell back, crashing on the floor. The sound of wood smashing against wood echoed through the library’s walls, matching the girl’s scream of shock.

Mike quickly helped his Biology partner stand up. Then, he sent a what-the-hell look at his girlfriend. Eleven just wiped the blood from her nose and quickly packed her things. She left the library, ignoring Max’s amused smile, Will’s shocked expression and Mike’s worried frown.

She was about to reach the bus stop, to check on the time schedule, when a voice called for her.

Eleven turned around and saw her clumsily boyfriend running to her, his arms holding too many books, and with his schoolbag, which had fallen from his shoulder to his elbow, unzipped.

Mike stopped next to her and took a deep breath.

“What...the...hell?” He asked, kneeling on the cemented floor so that he could put all his things inside his schoolbag and finally zip it.

Eleven stared down at him with angry eyes.

"You let her come too close, Mike Wheeler." She started out, dropping her books on the bus stop's bench. "I'm honestly so mad at you right now. I swear to God I'll burn her the next time I see her! I'll... I'll- Ugh, I'll make her pee herself! I mean, who the hell does she think she is, huh? Doesn't she know what 'personal space' means? Or what 'being in a relationship' is?" Eleven puffed. "Of course not. Otherwise she wouldn't try and make a move on *my boyfriend*, right- Why are you giving me that look!?"

Mike was looking at her with an amused expression, a tiny smirk on his lips. He stood up and threw his schoolbag over one of his shoulders.

"You're cute when you're jealous."

Eleven blinked.

"I- What?"

Mike chuckled, his brown eyes sparkling with delight and adoration. He stepped closer to her and dropped a hand on her cheek, which had reddened with annoyance.

"You're always pretty," he said, stroking her cheek. Eleven blinked again, even more confused. "But you're especially cute when you're jealous."

Eleven opened her mouth to say something, but no sound came out as she was too confused to find the words to reply to her stupid boyfriend.

In the end, she playfully hit his arm.

"Don't try and soothe things out like that!"

"I'm not!" Mike exclaimed sincerely. He stepped even more close and wrapped his other arm around her waist, pulling her so close to him that Eleven had to stand on the tip of her toes. She was much shorter than him, having Mike faced a huge growth spurt when he was fifteen. "It's really funny to see you... shout weird threats that I know you can make happen."

Eleven, who had had her head tilted back to look at her boyfriend in the eyes, gazed away, feeling timid.

“You’re a mouth-breather.”

“And I’m pretty sure Annabelle-“

“Don’t.”

Mike chuckled.

“Babe, you don’t need to be the jealous,” he said.

Eleven scowled at him.

“I’m serious!” Mike lowered his hand from her cheek to her waist, locking her into a tight hug. “I mean, ... so what she wants something from me? I’m not going to give it to her, am I? Like I know that... if a guy wants something from you, you won’t give in to whatever he wants....” Mike blinked, feeling suddenly afraid. “R-right? You won’t?”

Eleven’s eyebrow quirked up.

“R-right?” He tried again.

Eleven rolled her eyes.

“You’re such a mouth-breather,” she remarked and laid her head against his chest while her arms embraced Mike’s torso.

“You didn’t answer,” Mike muttered.

“Now I’ll make you wonder about it.”

“El!”

The third time Eleven felt jealousy she was in her second year of college and Mike on his third year. She had stayed behind one year in Hawkins to work for a bit (mostly babysitting and doing hours at the library) and to retake a few classes so that she was sure she was up to the task when the time came for her to enrol in college.

Mike was taking Computer Science, with a minor, funnily enough, in History, while Eleven got accepted in a Speech and Language Therapy course. They both shared a room in a three-room flat in which Dustin, who was studying to become a vet, and a girl named Mandy, who was studying to be a teacher, also lived. The flat was situated halfway to both their colleges: fifteen minutes by car, thirty minutes by bus and almost an hour on foot, in case they were crazy enough to walk to class.

At first, neither Hopper nor Karen were sure if they really wanted the two nineteen-year-olds to share a room, both preferring that each had their own space. But Mike and Eleven could be quite persistent, especially explaining the financial benefits of the situation that, in the end, convinced both parents to accept the arrangement. When Hopper had the courage to wonder about other situations that could be brought up by sleeping in the same room, Eleven, who had always been more upfront and unashamed than Mike, had replied, “We’ve been dating for three years now. What do people think we do all the time? Hold hands?”

Mike had truly believed that the chief of police would murder him in that moment, even though Eleven had been completely honest. You didn’t have to be a genius to know that, at some point, Mike and Eleven had left their innocence years behind and gone on to explore the unknown territories of what it meant to be in a long-term relationship.

“Are you guys having sex in there?” Dustin’s voice came from the other side of the door after he had knocked twice.

“No,” Mike said, rolling his eyes. He had an arm stretched out under Eleven’s pillow as the girl still slept soundly.

Dustin opened the door and took a quick look, making sure they were indeed not sucking face, and then walked in.

“I’m going to the supermarket with Mandy. Do you guys need anything?”

Mike shook his head.

“I don’t think so.”

“Eggos,” Eleven muttered from her side of the bed.

Mike looked over at his girlfriend, surprised to see that she had suddenly woken up.

“You bought a box of that last week!” Dustin exclaimed.

Eleven turned on the bed, laying on her back and trapping Mike’s arm behind her neck.

“Yeah, but I’ve eaten everything.”

Dustin stared at her, agape. Eleven stretched her arms up lazily before moving her body again and cuddling with Mike.

“Please, Dustin?” She asked nicely.

“Whatever. I’ll take some money out of Mike’s wallet,” he said and left the room.

“Whaaat?” Mike let out, but he was too late as Dustin had closed the bedroom’s door and had gone to get Mike’s wallet, which he always left on the piece of wooden furniture they had on the hall, by the door.

Eleven laughed lazily and moved her head up to look at Mike.

“You buy me eggos all the time,” she reminded him.

“Yeah, but that’s when I’m the one going to the groceries,” he muttered and flipped to his side, wrapping an arm around Eleven. His right leg found its way between her legs, tangling them together.

They stayed quiet for a few minutes, enjoying each other’s company and the laziness of the early morning. Eleven’s hand found its way into Mike’s thick messy hair while her boyfriend contently hid his hands under the t-shirt she wore to sleep, and then smiled when he felt her shivered. His hands were a bit cold against her warm back.

One of the reasons they had never said out loud for wanting to share

a room was this one: their need for alone moments with each other, of cuddling and hugging, as a way to remind themselves that there were no bad men coming for them; there was no Upside Down's doors anywhere. They were safe. *She* was safe.

"Can we stay all day in bed?" Eleven murmured against the skin of his neck.

Mike sighed.

"I wished," he whispered and moved his head so that he could kiss her hair. "We've that party we promised Mandy we'd go with her to."

"I don't like parties."

"But you like Mandy," Mike said.

Eleven sighed and moved away from Mike's arms, laying on her back. One of Mike's hands, which had been caressing the soft skin of her back, slid to her stomach. He rested it over her bellybutton.

"Mandy is lucky she's so adorable," Eleven muttered, rubbing one of her eyes.

Mandy was a very petit girl, with the curliest black hair Eleven had ever seen, and the biggest blue eyes. She was adorable and talked fast. Really fast. And she was a fighter. They first met when Eleven came to visit Mike over during his first year of college. She took one look at the girl and the way she interacted with the boys and instantly knew they would get along just well. Then, when Eleven moved in after getting into college, she and Mandy spent a lot of their free time together, studying and bonding over their points of view over life. They were quite alike.

"And I need a shower," Mike suddenly stated.

Eleven looked at him and saw the small smirk on her boyfriend's lips.

"Are you asking me to shower with you?"

Mike nodded sheepishly. She laughed and threw the sheets off their bodies.

“Come on, then. Before Dustin comes back and gives us a lesson on how we shouldn’t contaminate the common spaces of the house.”

The party that Mandy had convinced them to go was at a guy’s house, twenty minutes away from their small, humble flat. His parents were away on a trip, Mandy explained to them on their way to there, and the guy, Mark, had given her and pretty much everyone who heard him talk about the party an open invitation to stop by.

So, of course, the house was bursting with people. When they got there, they were immediately sucked in into huge waves of drunk students who were either dancing, playing drinking games or making out with each other. Eleven held on to Mike’s hand tightly, feeling a bit uneasy in there. She never liked crowds, especially ones that seemed as uncontrollable as this one. Drunk people were stupidly wild.

Mike managed to pull them to a quieter area of the kitchen, away from a beer-pong game that was happening over the kitchen’s table. Once they got there, they realized they had lost Mandy somewhere in the crowded party.

“I’ll find her,” Dustin volunteered and turned around, crossing the hall and entering the wild jungle that was the living-room.

Mike and Eleven leaned back against a wall, their fingers safely intertwined, while deciding what to do. Or, better, if Mandy would realize they had left five minutes after they got to the party.

“I mean, the flat is empty,” Eleven said innocently.

Mike groaned and laid his head against hers.

“You’re such a teaser.”

“Mike Wheeler?”

Mike raised his head upon hearing his name.

In front of the couple, there was a tall, dark-skinned girl with her hair done in a big braid, and her well-shaped body covered with a yellow, tight dress. She was looking at Mike, surprised, completely ignoring

the girl he was holding hands with.

“Michelle!” Mike said with a polite smile and moved closer to greet her with a handshake. “What are you doing here?”

“I could ask you the same thing,” the girl replied with a wide smile. A smile that Eleven did not like. “You’ve never been a party animal.”

“Well, my roommate convinced me to come to this one,” he explained.

“Oh, I see.” The girl giggled.

Eleven straightened her back and shortened the distance that Mike had put between them. She touched Mike’s elbow and he looked at her. His polite smile turned into wide smile, a happier one.

“Oh, introductions!” Mike suddenly remembered. “Michelle, this is El. El, this is Michelle, a classmate of mine.”

Eleven sent him a quick glare. What, she was just El now? No girlfriend? No special friend? No nothing? Just El?

“Hello,” the girl, Michelle, greeted, and Eleven could easily see how fake her smile was. “Nice to meet you.”

“Likewise,” Eleven muttered.

Jealousy was a bitch, especially if you had Eleven’s powers.

“Anyways, Michael,” Michelle turned to the boy again, “how about we celebrate the fact that you’re here with a couple of shots? What do you say?”

“Ah, I’m-“

“Found Mandy!” Dustin showed up, pulling Mandy with him. The girl already had a drink in her hands. “She’s drunk.”

“No, I’m not.”

“She’s about to get drunk,” Dustin corrected.

Suddenly, Mandy threw herself at Eleven, backing the girl against a hall. “El, you’re never going to believe who I just saw!” She exclaimed happily, hugging her roommate.

“Who?” Eleven asked, her eyes never leaving the conversation that was now happening between Michelle, Mike and Dustin. Of course, Michelle was more inclined to talking to Mike than to Dustin. You could see how the curly-haired boy was feeling a bit awkward, trying to pretend he was not seeing the flirtatious smiles the tall girl was sending his friend. Mike, of course, was being polite, like he always was, and oblivious to the fact that the girl was clearly looking for something.

Why did Mike never see it when a girl wanted him?

“El, are you listening to me?” Mandy asked.

Eleven looked at her and blinked.

“S-sorry. What is it?”

“Carl is here.”

Eleven frowned, confused.

“You know, Carl from my English Linguistics class?”

“Oh, that one!” Eleven exclaimed.

Carl was Mandy’s crush since her first year of college. He was this short, cute boy of Indian descent who had been paired up with Mandy in projects a couple of times throughout the past three years. He was nice, super nice, and funny, according to her, but he did not like her. Not in the same way she liked him, anyway.

“You should talk to him,” Eleven advised, her eyes skipping to where Dustin was now scratching the back of his neck awkwardly as Michelle laughed hysterically loud and Mike had a confused expression on his face.

“But what can I say?” Mandy asked desperate. “I mean, I don’t want to be annoying.”

Eleven looked back at her friend. Mandy's blue eyes were drowning in worry and fear. The girl clearly had no clue of what to do. Eleven understood how that was, to be scared of doing something wrong, of saying something wrong, and then annoyed people because she didn't understand things like they did.

"Mandy..." Eleven rested her hands on the girl's thin shoulders. "You can literally say whatever you want that you will never, ever, be annoying. You're amazing and Carl should feel like the luckiest boy on earth just because you gave him five minutes of your time."

"Oh, El." Mandy hugged her in a weird way since she had one of her hands occupied with a cup of vodka. "I'm going to talk about mythology with him!"

As Mandy skipped away in happy, tiny hops, Eleven's eyes turned to a lonely Dustin.

She blinked.

Why was Dustin alone?

"Where's Mike?" She asked as she approached her friend.

Dustin shrugged.

"The girl took him away because she wanted to drink with him? I tried to pull him away, but the girl was quite persistent and- Oh El, don't."

Eleven, who was about to turn and go after them, raised an eyebrow, confused.

"Don't what?"

"You're jealous."

"You know I have the right to be," Eleven replied.

Dustin sighed.

"But you know Mike won't give a damn about her. He'll get rid of her

in just a few minutes and come back to us.”

“But-“

“No buts.” Dustin shook his head determinedly. He pointed at the beer-pong game that was happening behind them. “Let’s go play a round of that and enjoy ourselves, yeah? Mike will be here soon.”

Three round later, with Eleven and Dustin kicking ass thanks to the girl’s powers, there was no sign of Mike. Mandy had shown up halfway through one of the rounds, holding hands with her crush. She was long gone now, as Dustin and Eleven stepped away from the beer-pong game, exhausted.

“Let’s find something for you to eat,” Dustin said. He knew the girl had overdone herself during the game, basically using her powers all the time to make them win.

Eleven, who wouldn’t admit it out loud, but did drain herself more than she should during the past hour, nodded tiredly.

“I want a burger,” she confessed.

Dustin frowned.

“I’m pretty sure there aren’t burgers in the house, El.”

“Let’s go outside. I saw a burger place on our way here.”

Dustin agreed.

“Let me find Mike-“

“No.”

Dustin blinked. Despite the exhaustion, Eleven found strength in herself to get just a bit angry.

“He can do whatever he wants.”

“El-“

Eleven left the kitchen and walked out the house without even

glancing at the living-room. Dustin followed her quietly.

They were almost outside the property when Eleven suddenly stopped. Dustin almost crashed against her, but stopped himself before it was too late and held on to her arms.

“What is-“ He went quiet when he saw what had made Eleven stop.

Mike was sitting on a public bench, on the other side of the street, with the girl from before. He had a hand on her back as the girl had her head between her legs and was coughing to the floor. On the ground, you could clearly see spots of something pasty and gross.

“Let’s go there,” Dustin said and pulled Eleven with him to cross the street. It was obvious that Eleven was in an inner fight with herself: keep being jealous or put it behind her back to help out the girl.

Hearing steps, Mike raised his head. Seeing Eleven, his lips curled into a stupid smile. You could see it in his eyes that he wasn’t sober. Or, maybe, in the way he said, “Eeeel!”, almost singing it out.

“What’s happened?” Eleven asked, looking at the girl who was now throwing up over her own vomit.

“She drank too much,” Mike explained, still rubbing the girl’s back. “She’s-“

“I’m so sorry,” the girl cried out. She looked up, her mouth all wet and her eyes red, and turned to Eleven. “I’m so sorry. I- I didn’t know. I didn’t know.”

Eleven frowned, confused.

“What is it?” She asked, looking at Mike.

Her boyfriend scratched his neck and looked away embarrassed.

“I’ll tell you later.”

Eleven knew he wouldn’t be telling her good news.

“Can we help with anything?” Dustin asked.

“We’re waiting for a taxi,” Mike said.

Almost as the words left his mouth, a car turned into the street and slowly drove its way to where they were.

“Come on, Michelle, let’s get you home,” Mike stated while helping the girl stand up. She leaned against his side, making him support almost all her weight. Mike looked at his friend and girlfriend. “I promised to take her home, you know...”

“We can come with you.”

“Nah, it’s fine, Dustin,” Mike said. He took one look at El. “You need to rest,” he added, noticing how exhausted she was.

Eleven felt tears behind her eyes.

They watched as Mike made Michelle get into the taxi and then followed her lead. The taxi drove away.

Dustin turned to Eleven and noticed the gleaming light in her eyes that came right before someone was about to cry.

“What’s wrong?”

“He noticed,” she muttered. “He noticed I was tired.”

Dustin smiled gently at Eleven before putting an arm around her shoulders and pulling her with him so that they could make their way to the burger place.

After feeding themselves with a big cheeseburger and a shared dose of French fries, they decided to call for a taxi as well to take them home.

“Do you think Mandy is okay?” Dustin asked out of blue.

Eleven nodded, her eyes half-closed and her head laying against the taxi seat.

“She’s fine.”

She surely was with Carl.

Right before they opened the flat's door, they noticed there was light coming from inside.

Mike was sitting in the sofa, eating a bag of cookies while he watched a commercial for cleaning products. He looked up when he heard the door opening. When he saw Eleven, he looked away ashamed.

"How was Michelle?" Dustin asked, taking out his jacket. Eleven made her way to her and Mike's bedroom.

"I got her to get inside her house, so I guess she's fine," Mike replied, his eyes following Eleven until she disappeared into the hallway. "Why is she so tired?"

"We played beer-pong," Dustin said, sitting down next to him and taking a cookie out of the bag. "She used her powers to make us win three times in a row."

Mike smiled proudly.

"How drunk are you?" Dustin questioned, taking another cookie.

"Been worse." Mike laid his head back on the sofa. "Michelle made me drink so many whiskey shots. It was ridiculous."

"No wonder she ended up throwing up."

Mike closed his eyes and shook his head.

"That's now why she threw up. I mean, not only..."

"Then, why-"

"I need to talk to El," Mike interrupted his friend. He let the bag of cookies slide to Dustin's lap as he stood up. "I'll see you tomorrow morning?"

"Yeah, of course. 'Night."

"G'night."

Eleven was sitting on their bed, already wearing her pyjamas: one of Mike's t-shirts and one of his old pair of boxers. She was biting her thumb's nail, a clear sign she was nervous.

Mike rubbed one of his eyes, feeling the dizziness of the drink still affecting his brain. Slowly, he moved to his side of the bed and sat down, toeing out his shoes. He clumsily undid his belt and pulled his trousers out. Finally, he laid on his back, pleased to feel the soft pillow against his head, and looked at Eleven.

She was waiting. Waiting to hear why Michelle had apologized to her.

Mike sighed.

"She kissed me," he said.

Eleven bit her thumb hard, her eyes going wide-opened.

"She was trying to make someone jealous," Mike continued. "A guy from our course... It turns out, he kind of hates me because I'm smarter than him? It's ridiculous, really. I don't even know who he is... Anyways, we're drinking and dancing and-" Mike pinched his nose and took a deep breath - "I knew that she was getting too close and I always paid attention to what we were doing, where I was standing, where she was standing... But I got distracted. I was so drunk..."

Mike went quiet as he saw Eleven turned around to finally face him. She crossed her legs in front of her and hid her hands between them. Mike noticed she had somehow her hair up in a messy ponytail.

"The guy showed up. I didn't know, of course, but... that's when she kissed me. And... I stopped her and told her, no, Michelle, I have a girlfriend. You just met my girlfriend."

Eleven's lips curled into a tiny smile. Mike turned to his side and raised himself up with his elbow.

"The moment she understood that you were my girlfriend, she felt sick... All the alcohol on her blood didn't help as well... So, I took her outside. She threw up and kept throwing up..." Mike licked his

lips. "She told me that... she got cheated once. She hates that. She- She didn't know. I-"

Mike shook his head and sat up, matching Eleven's position. He leaned over and grabbed her hands, intertwining their fingers together.

"I'm so used not to have to explain to people who you are to me that... that I didn't explicitly told her that you were my girlfriend when I introduced you guys. I... I just assume people know, you know? That you're mine and I'm yours."

Eleven nodded, understanding.

"And-" Mike raised their tangled hands to his face and groaned -"God, I'm so drunk."

Eleven chuckled softly. He looked at her from behind their hands and gave her a tiny, stupid smile.

"I'm sorry, El."

The girl sighed.

"If you knew she was throwing yourself at you, then why didn't you leave?"

Mike shrugged, lowering their hands to his lap.

"First of all, it would be rude." Eleven snorted at that. "And secondly, well, ... she didn't quite seem to have anyone there, you know? And she was drunk, so... I didn't want to leave her alone? I- I didn't quite think my plan through the party, El. I mean, I drank too many whiskey shots. It was whiskey, El."

His girlfriend laughed at him, a bit more relaxed and cheerful. She untangled their hands and made her way to his lap, resting one leg on each side of his waist. Mike wrapped his arms around her and hid his face on her neck.

"I love you," he muttered against her skin.

Eleven played with his hair gently.

“I love you too, you idiot with a big heart.”

Mike pulled away just the enough so that he could kiss her.

He tried to deepen the kiss, to lay Eleven down on the bed, but she suddenly pushed him back.

Mike gave her a pained look.

“Your mouth tastes like whiskey and cookies,” Eleven replied, disgusted.

Mike chuckled. Without her counting, he pulled them both down on the bed and they laid face to face, their legs tangled together.

“Tomorrow then,” he murmured and, without looking, he threw an arm behind him, looking for the light switch.

Suddenly, the lights went out without him doing anything.

Mike sighed happily and brought his arm back to where it was, dropped over Eleven’s body.

“I just love you so much.”

Author's Note:

Kudos & Comments are more than welcome.